

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-16 (Canceled).

Claim 17 (New): A liquid crystal optical device comprising
a composite layer comprising a mixture of a cured compound and a liquid crystal,
wherein the composite layer is sandwiched between a pair of substrates, the liquid crystal has
negative dielectric anisotropy, the mixture is free of a chiral agent, the substrates have
transparent electrodes, at least one substrate is transparent, and the cured compound
comprises cured units of a compound of formula (1)



wherein each of A_1 and A_2 , independently of each other, is an acryloyl group, a
methacryloyl group, a glycidyl group or an allyl group; each of R_1 and R_2 , independently of
each other, is a C_{2-6} alkylene group; Z is a bivalent mesogen structure; and each of n and m ,
independently of each other, is an integer of from 1 to 10.

Claim 18 (New): The device according to Claim 17, wherein each of the substrates
comprises a vertically orienting film.

Claim 19 (New): The device according to Claim 18, wherein the vertically orienting
films are polyimide films.

Claim 20 (New): The device according to Claim 19, wherein the polyimide films
face one another.

Claim 21 (New): The device according to Claim 17, wherein Z is a 4,4'-biphenylene group, or a 4,4'-biphenylene group having some or all of the hydrogen atoms substituted by C₁₋₂ alkyl groups or halogen atoms.

Claim 22 (New): The device according to Claim 17, wherein each of R₁ and R₂ is an ethylene group or a propylene group.

Claim 23 (New): The device according to Claim 17, wherein each of A₁ and A₂ is an acryloyl group or a methacryloyl group.

Claim 24 (New): The device according to Claim 17, wherein each of n and m is from 1 to 4.

Claim 25 (New): The device according to Claim 17, wherein the uncured curable compound comprises two compounds, and the molecular weight of one compound is twice the molecular weight of another compound.

Claim 26 (New): The device according to Claim 25, wherein the uncured curable compound comprises a compound having a mesogen structural portion and a curable compound containing no mesogen structural portion.

Claim 27 (New): The device according to Claim 25, wherein the two compounds have curable sites connectable to each other.

Claim 28 (New): The device according to Claim 25, wherein at least one of the compounds has a molecular weight of at least 1,000.

Claim 29 (New): The device according to Claim 17, wherein the uncured curable compound comprises a plurality of compounds of formula (1) wherein n and m are different.

Claim 30 (New): The method according to Claim 24, wherein the cured curable compound comprises at least one non-liquid crystalline compound.

Claim 31 (New): A light control element comprising the device of Claim 17.

Claim 32 (New): An optical shutter comprising the device of Claim 17.